

# RIVER RUNNERS FOR WILDERNESS

## A PROJECT OF LIVING RIVERS

May 1, 2006

Gene Terland  
Acting State Director  
Utah State BLM  
PO Box 45155  
Salt Lake City, Utah 94145-0155

UTAH STATE OFFICE  
RECEIVED  
ACCOUNTS UNIT  
2006 MAY -1 PM 4:11  
DEPT OF INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MGMT

Re: Protest of Utah May 2006 Lease Sale - UT-164, UT-184, UT-185, UT-187, UT-189, UT-190, UT-191, UT-208, UT-209, UT-210, UT-211, UT-212, UT-213, UT-214, UT-215, UT-216, UT-218, UT-219, UT-220, UT-245, UT-246, UT-253-A, UT-262-A, UT-262-B, UT-262-C, UT-269-A, UT-269-B, UT-269-C, UT-269-D, UT-269-F, UT-269-G, UT-269-H, UT-286 and UT-297.

Dear Mr. Terland:

River Runners for Wilderness, a national nonprofit grassroots group of 1700 river lovers, strives to protect the Colorado River and its tributaries. We have serious concerns with Utah BLM's May 2006 lease sale. Several of the May 2006 lease sale have the potential to significantly impact each of the following unique river corridors and its interconnected landscape. These include the Price River, San Rafael River, Green River and the San Juan River. Therefore, we formally protest all leases within these areas. These lease parcels include: UT-164, UT-184, UT-185, UT-187, UT-189, UT-190, UT-191, UT-208, UT-209, UT-210, UT-211, UT-212, UT-213, UT-214, UT-215, UT-216, UT-218, UT-219, UT-220, UT-245, UT-246, UT-253-A, UT-262-A, UT-262-B, UT-262-C, UT-269-A, UT-269-B, UT-269-C, UT-269-D, UT-269-F, UT-269-G, UT-269-H, UT-286 and UT-297.

Each of these canyon and river corridors provides an exceptional wild river experiences, in which numerous primitive recreational activities and outstanding solitude can be achieved. Any oil and gas leasing and development along these river sections would dramatically disrupt the area's natural characteristics and remarkable wild character.

Regarding BLM's quarter mile setbacks for development from these rivers, we adamantly contend that this not enough. All activity, including support vehicles along roads, drilling operations and the normal day to day operations of the well itself would significantly affect the natural quiet of these areas, as well as adversely impacting the solitude and wild experience each river currently provides.

Our constituents and their friends and families float these rivers using their own equipment and expertise. Self-guided river running recreation continues to grow at a fast pace. This, and the recent release of a new San Juan river guidebook that covers the Montezuma-down section, will result in increased visitation to the area, which benefits the Navajo Reservation, Bluff and Mexican Hat economies, unless the BLM allows drilling in that vicinity, which would quickly drive visitors away.

Trin Alcove, Ruby Ranch, the confluence of the San Rafael and Green Rivers and Labyrinth Canyon on the Green River are places much loved by self-guided river runners. Because noncommercial boaters are free to schedule their trips as they wish, many take time to explore the surrounding canyon rims on foot. Obviously, drilling within sight or sound of the canyon rims would be catastrophic to their experience and solitude.

Finally, Utah BLM should avoid all leasing within each of these locations, as both the Price and Monticello Field Offices are undergoing Resource Management Plan revisions. BLM should allow these plans to be finalized before any oil and gas leasing takes place.

Sincerely,



Jo Johnson  
Co-Director  
River Runners for Wilderness

PO BOX 17301, BOULDER, CO 80308 303.443.1806 FAX: 303-443-1129 WWW.RRFW.ORG